

Emperor 2561

### [Chapter 2561: The World Obeys](#)

Nine-linked Mountains wasn't as famous as the five great powers, but it was unfathomable. Even Lucidity King acted with prudence when dealing with this sect.

This promise of the woodcutter was a big deal. For millions of years, the sect has been acting in isolation, never stepping into the rest of the world.

"Go now." Li Qiye accepted the promise and said.

The old man bowed again before quietly leaving. Though he was powerful and same with his sect, he knew that their power was ephemeral like the moon in the water or the morning dew on the flowers.

No matter how strong they may be, they were still only ants before Li Qiye. He could destroy them with a single thought.

Thus, it was their honor to pledge this oath of loyalty. They were the ones reaching up above their station.

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Li Qiye didn't linger in Nine-linked Mountains after the battle. He chose to return to Skywrap City instead.

The small group consisted of Ill Lord and his peers along with Liu Chuqing and Bingchi Hanyu. Despite the few numbers, the spectators were still shocked to see them.

To have followers as powerful as Ill Lords? No one else in the world could enjoy this entourage, not even Lucidity King back then.

The group traveled at a fair speed, riding their carriages in the sky towards Skywrap.

However, wherever they went, the sects and clans along with all the inhabitants came out to show their respect.

In fact, even before he got to a city, the disciples from various powers have already lined up to the left and right of the path.

"Greetings, Your Majesty." When his carriage appeared on the horizon, these disciples prostrated and shouted in unison.

While the carriage was moving through the path, these disciples didn't dare to look up at Li Qiye. They continued kneeling until the carriage disappeared.

This happened multiple times along the path from Nine-linked Mountains till Skywrap. These cities and capitals were meticulous and attentive out of fear. They didn't wish to make the king unhappy lest he destroys their sects.

It was a magnificent and domineering spectacle, befitting a tyrant like him.

In the present, he didn't need to say anything and could still threaten everyone, forcing them down on the ground.

"Greetings, Your Majesty." Once his carriage stopped outside of Skywrap, the city was filled with kneeling citizens.

The troops from the Imperial Guards and the other legions have taken off their armors; their undershirt drenched with sweat.

Today seemed like a nightmare to them, perhaps their final day in this world.

All the legions have participated in the rebellion previously and sieged the city, wanting Tang Hexiang to take the reign. Who would have thought that this king they have chased away would return triumphantly today?

The only thing they could do right now was kneeling on the ground, awaiting judgment. None of them dared to think about rebellion or risking it all.

The Central Legion has been made an example. Supreme ancestors have died without a burial. They were nothing in comparison. Resisting would only end with their death, a complete massacre.

It was better to admit their crimes and wait for the punishment. Perhaps the king would show mercy and spare their lives. Perhaps a few generals would be executed, but at least the majority of the soldiers would be spared.

Li Qiye didn't bother to look at the massive crowd, still acting as nonchalant as ever.

He stared at the splendid gate and smiled: "Not bad cleaning up the imperial city so quickly, even the broken walls are fixed."

The crowd shuddered after hearing this. The ones who attacked the city back then were nervously trembling.

Numerous walls collapsed on that day and the city fell into chaos which people took advantage of. They stole treasures and anything worthwhile in the city and even the imperial palace.

Today, the walls looked perfect. The palace remained dazzling as always. All of the stolen items have been returned.

He didn't need to give an order. Everyone was scared out of their mind and hastily fixed everything at the capital. The frightened thieves also gave everything back.

The entire system lived under a state of nervousness since His Majesty's wrath could end with carnage and destruction.

That's why when he brought up the rebellion, the ones present felt their soul leaving their body. Heads might roll on the ground, but they were afraid of dragging their families and sects into this mess.

Of course, Li Qiye didn't pursue these trivial crimes. It was only a casual comment.

The group entered the palace. It looked the same as before - majestic and luxurious. All of the servants and maids were waiting as well.

In fact, the place was filled with gold and jade, even more extravagant than back during Lucidity King's reign. Li Qiye only smiled and paid no mind.

The return of the king should be a cause for celebration in the entire system, especially in Skywrap. The streets should be decorated with lanterns and colored banners, but strangely enough, all the cities seemed especially serene.

No one dared to act on their own volition without his orders, not even to celebrate. That's why instead of a joyous banquet and drowning in wine and meat, the citizens felt as if they were treading on thin ice.

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After several days of his return, the dismissed Zhang Jiadi also came back.

"Your Majesty." Jiadi immediately prostrated after seeing Li Qiye: "Your servant was worthless and couldn't stay around to serve you, please punish me."

"Long time no see, you may rise. I pardon you." Li Qiye chuckled.

Jiadi remained on his knees.

"You got something to say?" Li Qiye didn't bother asking where he went. His leisure demeanor seemed to say that he already knew everything.

"Your servant came back this time for two reasons. First is to humbly beg for forgiveness, the second is to ask for permission to retire."

"Retire?" Li Qiye smiled.

"Your Majesty, I was incapable and shameless, unable to stay with you to the end. That's why I'm asking for permission to retire. If this isn't possible, please demote me back to being a foot soldier." Jiadi quietly said.

"Incapable and shameless? Incorrect." Li Qiye said: "You have shown great loyalty staying with me until the last day, a meritorious and commendable act. You are both an accomplished and loyal official, so those words do not describe you."

#### [Chapter 2562: Sun Lengying's Reappearance](#)

Zhang Jiadi remained on his knees with his head nearly touching the ground despite hearing the encouragement.

"You've made up your mind?" Li Qiye asked with a smile.

"Your Majesty, I'm too useless to contribute even by staying, please grant me permission." Jiadi said, clearly having made up his mind.

Li Qiye eventually nodded: "Very well, I won't force you to stay if you wish to leave. You may stay wherever you please for your retirement."

"Thank you, Your Majesty." Jiadi raised up and bowed exactly three times in a solemn manner.

“Go now, you may also take any treasure you fancy in the palace.” Li Qiye waved his sleeve while looking at the guy.

“Your Majesty, I am moved to tears because of your magnanimity. I won’t need anything else.” Jiadi respectfully said.

“Very well, as you please.” Li Qiye nodded, accepting his wishes.

“Take care, Your Majesty.” Jiadi bowed once more before leaving.

In theory, Jiadi should be sticking around. After all, he has proved his absolute loyalty and now, the king had total authority. If Jiadi were to stay, he would rise in ranks without any opposition. Alas, he chose to retire instead.

Given up this good opportunity was quite unbelievable. However, Li Qiye wasn’t caught off guard and didn’t try to convince the old man otherwise.

“Take care.” Li Qiye nodded and said.

Jiadi’s lips slightly twitched from hesitation as if he wanted to say something but didn’t know how to put it.

“Your Majesty, I saw Silver Secret Legion during my departure. They were guarding right outside the system, but I don’t know if they’re still there.” He finally decided to speak.

Li Qiye smiled and said: “Silver Secret Legion, huh? I almost forgot since it’s so long ago. That’s fine, Silver or Gold Secret, whatever, can’t reach the apex.”

Jiadi’s response was stuck in his throat. All he could say was: “Please be careful, Your Majesty. Your safety relates to the well-being and prosperity of the entire system.”

“You sound like you know something.” Li Qiye wasn’t afraid at all on his throne.

Jiadi fell into silence and couldn’t reply. Like Li Qiye had said, he was a loyal man.

“Your Majesty, just please, be on guard. Sometimes we can be caught off guard by people who shouldn’t exist. Turn around and suddenly, there’s a dead man standing behind you.”

“I’m aware, I won’t make it difficult for you, just go.” Li Qiye nodded.

“Take care.” Jiadi sighed because he couldn’t get involved. Revealing this was the best he could do because of his loyalty.

Li Qiye stared outside after he left with a faint smile on his face.

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While Li Qiye was back at the imperial city, another event was happening in a different spot in Imperial Lineage - the Mu Clan, one of the three behemoths.

In a heavily guarded location, a very powerful ancestor from the Mu greeted an unexpected guest.

"I was curious about why the birds were chirping so early this morning. So it's Brother Sun, which wind brings you here to my place? What a surprise." The ancestor happily smiled after seeing the guest.

"Brother Mu, you're too polite." The guest was a retiree from Nine Secrets, Sun Lengying.

He still wore the same gray outfit, looking just like a shadow.

"Our condolences for Lucidity King's passing." The ancestor said: "Although our two houses were at odds, Lucidity King was still a peerless talent worthy of respect. Unfortunately, for a variety of reasons, I couldn't personally come to Nine Secrets and offer my respect."

"His Majesty in the Yellow River will appreciate your kind words." Lengyung was as cold as always. His expression and thoughts were impossible to read.

"After hearing about his death, I thought he would pass the throne to you because you have followed him for three generations with numerous contributions. Plus, you're the only one who can handle the responsibility. Who would have thought he would pass it to an unknown junior? What a shame and such unfairness towards you. Lucidity King made a mistake." The ancestor criticized.

"Thank you, Brother Sun, but let's not talk about the past. I am here today to ask you for help." Lengying showed no emotion.

"You are one of the top Eternals in the present day, you make me feel inadequate in comparison." The ancestor smiled: "Not to mention you are in charge of Silver Secret, more than enough to sweep through the world and always be victorious. An old man like me can't offer much help."

"Don't be so quick to refuse, Brother Mu, I won't ask you to help for nothing. Plus, the Mu wouldn't help an outsider for no reason anyway, right?" Lengying said directly.

"I'm sure whatever you have in mind is amazing, but certainly not easy either, so if you can't do yourself, we won't be that helpful either." The ancestor said.

"Is that so? Brother Mu, are you not interested even when all of Nine Secrets are up for the taking?" Lengying stared at him and asked.

"You're joking, Brother Sun." The ancestor smiled: "Though I haven't been outside, I've heard that Silver Secret has sealed the external pathways, rendering it virtually impossible for outsiders to come in."

"Am I not here right now before you as a guest?" Lengying said.

"That's an interesting comment, but I know you are completely loyal to Lucidity King. No one would question this, so I have a hard time believing that you would have any ideas towards Nine Secrets."

"I am indeed loyal to His Majesty." Lengying said: "However, he has passed away so there is nothing worth remembering in the system. I know that you wouldn't miss this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. If you can topple Nine Secrets, your name will go down in the historical annals as well as your clan's text along with the old sages of the Mu."

"That is indeed tempting, but I'm afraid I will still have no say no." The ancestor shook his head with a smile.

He stared straight at Lengying and said: "Yes, your system has been sealed but I've heard that the new king is unbeatable. He killed War King and supreme ancestors such as Bingchi Juezun."

He paused for a bit: "That's why I don't think our clan wants to get involved in this mess. I'm taking back my earlier statement, Lucidity King clearly knew that this youth was exceptional before passing the throne to him."

Lengying replied: "I can't and won't deny the new king's power. He surprised everyone by killing those guys."

"That's why I said we can't help even if we wanted to." The ancestor said: "We both know how strong those ancestors were. Even if I go all out, I would only get a draw against War King, or to be generous, maybe I'm a little bit stronger. Your king's power exceeded everyone's expectations, and our clan doesn't need to provoke such a powerful foe. I'm sorry, we won't be able to help you, Brother Sun. We do feel indignant that you didn't get rewarded for your loyalty to Nine Secrets."

"I accept your sincerity, Brother Mu." Lengying smiled: "But it looks like fear is paralyzing you just like in the past when you were up versus Lucidity King. Your hesitation and lack of decisiveness made you miss many great opportunities."

"Brother Sun, your psychological taunting is useless against me. I'm no longer a hot-headed youth who get riles up by these comments. Please leave." The ancestor smiled and said.

#### [Chapter 2563: Fiercest](#)

This ancestor of the Mu has had enough of this conversation.

The relationship between the three great behemoths was very delicate. One always wanted to rise above the others but afraid that the third would take advantage of the situation.

Because of this, they were both friends and enemies while maintaining this stalemate. No large-scale conflicts have started just yet, only minor skirmishes.

The Mu naturally thought about taking actions against Nine Secrets after receiving news of Lucidity King's death. However, the new king had full control over that system now and they didn't want to get involved.

Mobilizing against Nine Secrets might be doing exactly what the Li Clan wanted. The Li would benefit the most from a fight between the Mu and Nine Secrets.

Lengying didn't leave even after being asked to leave. He sipped his tea and said: "Don't chase me away so fast, Brother Mu, let me finish."

"Brother Sun, no need if you wish to continue on persuading me." The ancestor said: "We will not participate in this mess, so please drop this idea. Of course, if you are just here to drink and chat with me, then you're welcome to stay."

"I'm thankful for your hospitality, Brother Mu." Lengying drank his tea again before speaking: "I've heard that your clan has been searching for someone recently."

“You’re asking the wrong person, Brother Sun. I haven’t paid attention to mundane matters for a long time, I don’t know if the juniors are looking for people.”

“Is that so?” Lengying was relaxed. After a while, he added: “If my ears are still working, I heard that the Mu is searching for a youth with the title of Fiercest. Am I wrong?”

“Who did you heard it from?” The Mu Ancestor’s eyes turned cold.

Keep in mind that when such a powerful Eternal showed this expression, so many people would tremble in fear.

Lengying took his time: “Paper can’t wrap fire and no walls can block all winds. I just want to remind you about a particular promise your clan has made with Jade-break True Emperor. It wouldn’t be good if the emperor were to find out about your violation. Given the emperor’s temperament, he might start a war between the Mu and the Li.”

Lengying cleared his throat and continued: “If I’m not mistaken, Jade-break True Emperor broke into your clan with the protection of Gu Yifei, no one could stop them back then...”

“Are you threatening us, Brother Sun?” The ancestor uttered coldly.

“Brother Mu, you misunderstood. I am only reminding you so that history doesn’t repeat itself.” Lengying remained calm, still enjoying his tea.

“Thank you then, Brother Sun.” The ancestor snorted.

“No need to thank me so quickly, I still have a gift for you. I’m sure you will like it.” Lengying said.

“I’m listening.” The ancestor scowled, clearly dissatisfied with Lengying.

“Brother Mu, the truth is that our new king is Fiercest, the person you are looking for!” Lengying revealed.

“Brother Sun, that’s not funny.” The ancestor was stunned for a moment before turning cold again.

“Brother Mu, you think I am messing with you?” Lengying stayed calm.

The ancestor stared at him to read his expression for a while before replying: “Even if you wish to use a borrowed knife, don’t make it too obvious.”

“Amazing coincidences can happen in this world. Haven’t you heard of the proverb, there is no story without coincidences?” Lengying took another sip of tea. [1]

“Still hard to believe.” The ancestor coldly said.

“But am I not here before you in person, you think I would employ such a naive trick for a borrowed knife? Your clan will help me after hearing a lie? That’s impossible.” Lengying said.

The ancestor agreed. Lengying was no idiot that would use something so childish.

“I am not a good person and have done many bad things in life; my hands are stained with blood.”

Lengying continued: “But Brother Mu, am I not a trustworthy person? My promise is definitely worth something, right?”

“You are a man of your word!” The ancestor had to admit.

Sun Lengying was always stingy with his words, treating them as precious as gold. That’s why he always stayed true to his statements and keep his promise.

“That’s why I don’t need to trick your clan about this. I would only be humiliating myself and acting like a clown by doing so.” Lengying said.

“I’m still in disbelief.” The ancestor said.

“Go ahead and confirm it, I’m sure your clan can dig up information about someone.” Lengying said.

“We will.” The ancestor accepted.

“It won’t be a problem. And, I know your clan wants revenge for Mu Shaochen, so can we talk now?” Lengying said.

“What do you want?” The ancestor replied.

“Nothing, just what belongs to me. With your clan’s help, of course.” Lengying responded.

“I’m sure Lucidity King had his reasons for passing the throne down to that youth.” The ancestor chuckled.

“That’s all in the past, I only want to take back Nine Secrets, not dwell on bygones.” Lengying said.

“He’s clearly an extremely powerful Eternal to be able to seize the throne like that.” The ancestor said: “Brother Sun, you need to know that you’re facing the master of Nine Secrets. You will become the enemy of an entire system, quite unwise.”

“I also have the help of your clan. I’m sure you want nothing more than to kill him.” Lengying coldly said.

“I won’t deny that, but we don’t need to help you either, Brother Sun.” The ancestor slowly said.

“I’m confident that people won’t say no as long as the conditions are right. Our system is large and can satisfy any of your demands. Just say the word.” Lengying offered.

The ancestor’s eyes narrowed while staring at Lengying. The guy was right, no one would say no as long as their demands were met.

Nine Secrets System had plenty of daoist scriptures and riches. If their clan had access to take whatever they wanted... Yes, this tempting condition was too much to say no. The ancestor’s heart naturally started beating faster.

“That’s very generous indeed, Brother Sun.” The ancestor said.

“It’s justified when asking someone for help. I’m sure you will want to be friends and cooperate with me.” Lengying said.

“You are willing to open up your system? Don’t change your mind at that point.” The ancestor said.

“Don’t worry, Brother Mu. I, Sun Lengying, am a man of my word. Plus, I only want what belongs to me and don’t care about the rest, so your clan can ask for anything.” Lengying said.



The ancestor started contemplating. This was killing two birds with one stone - revenge on top of Nine Secrets being open to them.

“You don’t need to answer now.” Lengying added: “Wait until your clan knows what it wants before making your request. I’m easy to work with.”

“Very well, I won’t be reserved then.” The ancestor said.

“That’s how it should be.” Lengying said.

“However, Brother Sun, this Fiercest guy could come up from below on top of dominating your system, I guess I don’t need to say more about his abilities.” The tone from the ancestor became serious.

Lengying looked him in the eyes in response: “Yes, he is immensely powerful, but that’s also with the help of our system. Once he leaves, he’ll weaken by a bit. Of course, if we can lead him to your clan, I’m sure our side will have the absolute advantage. He’ll be a moth drawn to the flame.”

#### [Chapter 2564: Accepting The Punishment](#)

On the third day of his return, a servant came in and reported: “Your Majesty, Qin Jianyao of Calm Lotus is waiting for her punishment outside.”

“A bit interesting.” Li Qiye smiled, not surprised in the slightest.

A group of people kneeled outside the palace. Some had gray hair, clearly ancestor-level characters. A few were Eternals as well. None dared to breathe loudly.

Those who cared enough to take a careful look would notice that they were all from Calm Lotus Monastery.

The one kneeling up front was the beautiful Qin Jianyao. She quietly prostrated with her head lowered.

Calm Lotus was one of the five great powers, perhaps the strongest among them. It had two secret words, allowing it to be evenly matched against War Saint Dynasty for a long period of time.

These ancestors were all famous, successfully deterring the world before. Alas, all they could do now was wait for punishment from the new king.

The spectators didn’t dare to say anything and could only watch in silence.

After what seems like an eternity, someone shouted: “His Majesty is here.”

The crowd glanced over and saw Li Qiye slowly walking closer. Although he wore a regular robe instead of a dragon one, he still looked as supreme as ever.

“Your Majesty.” Everyone got on their knees.

“Your Majesty.” Qin Jianyao bowed her head; the ancestors did the same thing, not daring to look up.

Li Qiye looked at her and said insipidly: “Little girl, you moved quite fast.”

“Your Majesty, I am here to plead guilty.” She remained composed yet respectful, devoid of fear and anxiety.

“Mmm.” Li Qiye simply nodded in response.

“Our Calm Lotus Monastery failed to see the flow of things and betrayed you, Your Majesty. Rebellion is a great sin.” Jianyao said: “I know that we can’t escape the inevitable punishment so today, the ancestors and I are here to face the consequences.”

The ancestors remained still, awaiting his decision.

They were all prideful, especially the experienced Eternals. They weren’t afraid of death and could face it without any problem.

However, they couldn’t watch their sect being destroyed. A while, their supreme ancestor wanted the immortal rope and had earned their support.

Today, the king would definitely destroy their sect. They didn’t wish to become sinners - the reason for the end of their sect. How could they face their ancestors and sages in the afterlife? That’s why they were here today with Qin Jianyao, ready to accept their fate.

“I see the sincerity. Unfortunately, death is warranted.” Li Qiye said.

“We understand.” She didn’t become afraid: “The elders and I are ready for death, hoping that our lives will wash away our great crimes. Please show mercy and spare the youths in our sect. They are only normal cultivators who didn’t get involved in the decision-making process. We are the only ones at fault, the ones deserving death.” She said.

She had tried to convince the ancestors to not oppose Li Qiye, but the supreme ancestor and fellow elders didn’t listen to her. She was even imprisoned for disobedience.

However, in this crucial moment, she still took responsibility and gathered the ancestors here in order to trade their lives for the wellbeing of Calm Lotus.

She knew that it was only a matter of time before Li Qiye attacks their sect. The only thing she could do was try and find a way to save the young disciples even if it meant throwing her life away.

“Spare their lives, huh?” Li Qiye didn’t seem to be moved.

“Yes, please show mercy, Your Majesty.” Jianyao continued: “We are willing to give up our territories and treasuries as well so that our disciples can be spared. They are weak like ants and won’t stand in the way of your conquest at all.”

Everyone held their breath. Giving up all of these things meant that Calm Lotus would cease to exist.

One of the strongest lineages in Nine Secrets was going to disappear in this manner? This result made people take a deep breath.

Alas, they knew that there was no other choice. Jianyao picked the wisest course to earn the king’s forgiveness.

At the very least, the young ones would be able to escape this disaster. Their sect would continue on with this branch.

Stubbornly resisting would only incite the king's fury. Blood would flow like the rivers then. All of Calm Lotus would turn to ashes and all of their disciples would be killed. Their sect would lose their legacy from then on.

"The offenders will obviously die, but the innocent shall be pardoned." Li Qiye smiled and said: You haven't disobeyed me, so no punishment."

"..." The calm Jianyao finally became surprised.

"Yes, you have your flaws but are still smart enough to see the grand scheme of things." Li Qiye waved his sleeve: "No punishment for you, but the rest of the ancestors shall pay. Calm Lotus Monastery will be made an example as well."

Jianyao came prepared for death in order to save the young ones, not expecting to be spared by Li Qiye at the last second.

"I am willing to die as an atonement for my sect's mistake." Jianyao bowed her head with sincerity.

Li Qiye dismissed her comment: "No crime, no death. As for the rest of you, there's no avoiding this. End yourselves."

Jianyao didn't know what to say and could only look back at the kneeling ancestors.

Among them were her seniors, even her master. They watched her grow up and treated her like family. Today, they were going to the Yellow River one step ahead of her.

"Child, we count on you to take care of Calm Lotus in the future." One ancestor nodded seriously at Jianyao and said: "We are paying for our crime now, take care."

He groaned afterward as blood dripped down the corner of his lips; his body fell straight to the ground.

After seeing the first to go, the other ancestors took action and killed themselves by severing their veins and destroying their true fate. One corpse fell after another until no one was left but Jianyao.

These beings used to be the strongest masters in Nine Secrets. All of them chose to die today in order to save their sect.

This was already the best outcome for Calm Lotus. Their youths managed to survive, and Qin Jianyao was the most important member. There was still hope yet.

Her eyes glistened with tears but she didn't vocally cry.

"Go, I won't destroy your sect but other punishments will be carried out." Li Qiye said.

"Thank you, Your Majesty." She kowtowed again before gathering the corpses of her ancestors.

"Ill Lord." Li Qiye said.

"Young Noble, do you have an order for me?" Ill Lord appeared and bowed before Li Qiye.

"Go with Golden Dragon and the others to sweep through, hmm, the five legions and Myriad Formation Kingdom or whatever. I almost forgot about this." Li Qiye ordered.

“Affirmative.” The other four masters stood behind Ill Lord and shouted in unison.

The spectators outside the palace gasped, realizing that carnage was about to ensue in Nine Secrets.

### [Chapter 2565: Shocked](#)

Ill Lord’s group started a bloodbath in one night. They broke through to the imperial palace of Myriad Formation Kingdom and destroyed its great formations and hidden cards.

Next, its ancestors and legions became victims.

The palace collapsed in entirety and the ruling clan was killed off. This signaled the end of Myriad Formation until the king sends a new ruler in place.

The destruction of Myriad Formation in just one night caused quite a stir in the system.

Alas, Ill Lord’s victory wasn’t surprising either. The old man understood the system too well since he came from this place. The great formations were formidable but not enough to stop these five masters.

War Saint Dynasty also experienced a similar cleansing with the end of the Sacred Cabinet. The members were massacred and their treasures were taken by the king.

Next, Ill Lord’s group took over the five legions. The majority of the generals were killed, allowing the group to have perfect control.

Next, the Bingchi and Calm Lotus also received punishment and cleansing. Fortunately for the Bingchi, Hanyu managed to save them or they would have turned to ashes just like Myriad Formation Kingdom. Calm Lotus also suffered heavy punishments but it was able to protect their lifeblood thanks to Qin Jianyao.

In just one night, these great powers and the five legions had to face the music. So many were killed as Nine Secrets experienced a monumental change. It was about to enter the era of the new king.

Other sects were scared out of their mind, from the bottom level to the upper echelon - afraid that the king would point his sword towards them as well.

Among the five great powers, only Godstep Sect and Waterfront Pavilion were lucky enough to escape any punishment.

Needless to say about the latter, everyone knew how the king dotes on Liu Chuqing. That’s why Waterfront looked even more prestigious than before. In the past, it wasn’t comparable to Calm Lotus but now, its status rose above the other lineages.

As for Godstep, it chose to stay away from the political struggle. It closed their doors and stayed away from the secular world so the disaster didn’t spread to them. This was thanks to the insightful vision of Wind God or they wouldn’t have been so lucky. Godstep was certainly the weakest of the five but being a lucky survivor also propelled its current status.

“How fortunate.” Wind God received news about the various massacres. He got cold sweats after hearing about the destruction of Myriad Formation Kingdom.

If he didn't take Li Qiye to Godstep, perhaps his sect would be annihilated as well from mingling together with Myriad Formation Kingdom.

"What a shame." He concluded while shaking his head at his disciples and Splendorous Saintess Lu Bing: "One mistake affecting your entire life. His Majesty has soared above the nine heavens, so the queen also became illustrious."

Wind God was full of regrets. It was such a good opportunity when Li Qiye was staying at his sect. If the saintess had tried to get along with him, she would have the same status as Liu Chuqing right now.

The saintess looked dejected with her head hanging low. She looked down on Li Qiye back then, thinking that he was only a useless king. But now, he was an untouchable existence that she could only look up at.

She also used to be on the same level as Liu Chuqing. Both of them had a marriage agreement with Li Qiye but because of her pride, she wanted to break off the engagement.

Now, Chuqing was worshipped by all of Nine Secrets on top of having the nine highly-coveted words - the only one in all of Nine Secrets enjoying this glory. She, on the other hand, remained a princess of Godstep, not comparable to the queen of the system. She sighed in dejection. Her short-sighted foolishness left her in this situation.

Nevertheless, their sect was still lucky because they managed to survive this disaster.

Wind God turned towards Zhang Jianchuan. He might not be the most talented in the sect but he certainly had the most potential in the future. The sect's prosperity relied on him.

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The system became serene again after the bloodbath. Li Qiye didn't care for mundane matters and left everything to Liu Chuqing.

This was her first exposure to administrative duty so she lacked confidence. Nevertheless, she eventually accepted the task after receiving encouragement from Li Qiye.

He purposely groomed her since Nine Secrets was only a temporary stop to him. He would leave soon enough and would return this land. Thus, he chose Liu Chuqing as the next successor. After taking care of mundane matters, he focused on searching for the grand dao.

Chuqing was a gentle ruler compared to Li Qiye's brutality. Nine Secrets System became peaceful and lively again. The frightened sects moved on with their lives. Everyone felt that the new queen was indeed virtuous and kind, worthy of her position.

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Farther away in Imperial was a declining system named Stone Harmony. A big event had just happened here.

It was once extremely powerful. During its peak, it managed to reign the entire world. The Mu and Li paled in comparison back then. One could say that it had united Imperial Lineage, simply unstoppable.

Strange enough, the system started declining without facing any external threat. More and more people started to migrate and left the desolate land behind.

After declining to a certain extent, a system's dao source would change as well. When it deteriorated and became unable to support the land, the entire thing would collapse. It would fall from Imperial Lineage down to Myriad Lineage.

Insane Court was an example. It was an immortal system at its peak and eventually fell all the way down to Myriad Lineage.

So now, Stone Harmony was abandoned with no powerful sect to speak of. Not to mention powerful entities similar to Calm Lotus or Bingchi, one couldn't even find a first-rate sect there.

In fact, Stone Harmony would still be a terrible system down in Myriad Lineage, on the verge of destruction.

The strange part was that after millions of years, this system continued to stay in Imperial Lineage. There was no sign of it falling down to the lower realm.

People couldn't come up with an explanation for this unique phenomenon. Later on, one progenitor observed the system. This great being concluded that its dao source was still as vibrant as ever. That's why the reason why it could linger in Imperial.

This only further confused everyone. If the dao source was still powerful, then why did the system decline so rapidly?

#### [Chapter 2566: Stone Harmony Dao System](#)

The night in Stone Harmony was peaceful due to a lack of cultivators present because of its decline.

White Orchid City had thirty thousand inhabitants or so. Of course, this could only be considered a tiny location for many systems. Even a village could have this many people.

Unfortunately, only one or two cities could match White Orchid in Stone Harmony.

The night was quiet here as well. It looked serene like a blossoming orchid. Many residents were already deep in sleep, enjoying their sweet dreams.

"Boom!" A loud explosion woke everyone up.

"What's going on?!" Someone shouted while more explosions ensued.

"No, the city is sinking!" People found that it wasn't only themselves nor their houses that were sinking, the entire area was collapsing.

A large pit came out of nowhere and all of White Orchid started descending down the bottomless depth.

It was too late to react for those who have just woken up. All they could do was panic and shout.

"Clank!" The strongest cultivator in White Orchid unsheathed his sword and rushed to the sky, wanting to escape.

“Boom!” An invisible hand immediately snapped his sword in half. Large tentacles drilled out of the ground and coil around the man, pulling him into the pit.

“No...” His scream of horror gradually tapered off.

A bang eventually resounded as if the city has finally made it to the bottom of the depth. The ground shook for a bit.

Only a bottomless pit was left behind where the city used to be, resembling the bloody jaw of a primordial beast.

No one knew what happened to White Orchid. Its inhabitants disappeared just like that.

An aura suddenly emerged with the city’s disappearance. Few in the system could sense it, let alone outsiders.

However, Li Qiye who was cultivating in his palace immediately opened his eyes.

In this split second, they exuded a frightening ray crossing through the realms and illuminated Stone Harmony.

Southpeak Woodcutter became alarmed a bit later after Li Qiye. He looked over and murmured: “This aura... hmm, very familiar, I wonder what happened?”

Meanwhile, Li Qiye came out of his palace and continued his peering search towards the depth of the world.

“Young Noble.” Ill Lord who was guarding the area became surprised.

Li Qiye told Liu Chuqing’s group: “I’m going to Stone Harmony Dao System and leaving this place to you, I’ll come back when I’m finished.”

“What happened?” Chuqing became worried because of his sudden departure.

He gently stroke her hair while staring at the night sky: “I don’t know right now, but I’ll find out soon. It’s not a good thing, that’s for sure. But just stay here, no need to worry.”

Chuqing obediently nodded.

“Young Noble, we will make sure Her Highness is safe.” Ill Lord’s group bowed towards Li Qiye.

He nodded. Few in Imperial were actually strong enough to invade Nine Secrets with them around.

He took one step and crossed through space, disappearing into the starry sky.

The woodcutter was also interested in this aura but after noticing that Li Qiye had left his palace, he simply gave up.

“Hmm, if His Majesty is going himself, he can definitely figure out what’s going on.” The woodcutter smiled and shook his head before blowing out a ring of smoke.

Li Qiye traveled through one system after another with peerless speed and finally made it to Stone Harmony System.

He took a deep breath to sense the aura of this place.

At this moment, he could tell that this vast land has been abandoned. The mountains and rivers were tattered. Both the great peaks and mighty oceans have lost their spirit energy - a world on the verge of death.

It wouldn't take long before this place turns into a desert. The entire system would collapse.

However, he also noticed a vigorous life force within the withered aura. This strand of life force was powerful and rich, seemingly wrapping around a robust lifeform...

"Something's wrong..." His eyes became serious after noticing this power; his expression soured.

He landed on the system and buried his hand into the mud. He closed his eyes to feel the land and the beat of the system.

The same outcome happened - a sensation of withering and desolation. The grand dao of this place resembled feeble spiderwebs, virtually undetectable.

However, he penetrated all the way deep to the core - the dao source of the land. He sensed a majestic power - one as vast as an ocean.

It meant that the system still had grand dao deep underground. However, something seemed to be enveloping and hiding this power. As a result, the dao source couldn't provide for the dao land and the inhabitants.

This dao source was still the same as before. This was the reason why the one progenitor said Stone Harmony couldn't fall to Myriad Lineage.

"A bit interesting." Li Qiye's gaze pierced through the ground again.

After a while, he started walking towards the horizon. One step took him an incomparably far distance. It didn't take long before he appeared above White Orchid City.

Of course, only a bottomless abyss remained. Only darkness existed as far as the eye can see.

He squatted down by the edge and touched the ground for a bit before grimacing.

This wasn't a natural phenomenon. Something powerful akin to a devil had taken the entire city down underground.

He smiled and jumped down the abyss. Anyone else would be scared out of their mind at the disappearance of an entire city, let alone looking at this terrifying pit.

This wasn't the case for Li Qiye. He was as nonchalant as ever.

After reaching a certain depth, he landed on a section of rock sticking out of the side. He grabbed a handful of mud before letting it scatter downward. He managed to sense the rare and weak aura within this mud.

It was unique yet all-too-familiar with Li Qiye. The same aura existed on the Three Immortals Tree and the black soil.



“No wonder why that woodcutter said this aura was familiar. Such a lucky coincidence.” Li Qiye smiled with a serious gaze: “The old man is really treating me as an errand boy. Does he want me to run across Three Immortals? Hiring me is not cheap, will you be able to pay?”

He was referring to someone else, not the woodcutter.

#### [Chapter 2567: Li Yuzhen](#)

“Buzz.” A portal suddenly appeared in the sky above the bottomless pit. A person space-traveled into this area.

She slightly grimaced after noticing the disappearance of White Orchid.

Anyone else would certainly be frightened, realizing the looming danger. Escaping should be the first reaction.

However, the girl was quite bold and began to descend down the pit.

She quickly made it to Li Qiye’s position and found his existence surprising. She thought she was the first one to get here, not expecting someone even earlier.

She carefully looked at Li Qiye, wanting to get a good read on him. Meanwhile, he naturally did the same. Of course, his stare was much more invasive and rude, at least in the eyes of others.

Her beauty deterred others from looking straight at her, overwhelmed with both admiration and respect.

Her features were exquisitely sculpted like a work of art. One would be hard-pressed to notice any flaw. Her eyes were as bright as the stars at night, shining like the luster of gems.

Eyebrows resembling the far mountains with a unique charm to them - instilling a deep impression to any spectator.

This was a transcending beauty. Jianyao had a similar aura, but she gave the feeling of being otherworldly. On the other hand, this girl was real.

She looked like a piece of jade deep in a valley - precious and flawless, an ultimate treasure.

She wore a sapphire blue dress with a white moon embroidery. The bottom spread out like a peacock tail but not in a gaudy manner for it was full of elegance.

Her aura commanded attention even more than her beauty since she looked like a dominating ruler.

This particular aura, in theory, should be out of place but it wasn’t the case here.

This girl looked ready to fight whenever and wherever. One should describe her as being decisive and determined.

She purposely hid her aura yet each of her actions still looked as dominating as ever. This was indicative of her strength.

A duality of conflicting traits that didn’t seem out of place, just enough to demand respect and fear.

The two of them gauged each other. She found Li Qiye to be an ordinary man wearing a cheap robe. Someone like him could just disappear in a crowd.

Upon closer inspection, she found him to be unfathomable, especially his eyes containing an entire galaxy.

“Dao Brother, my name is Yuzhen, may I ask for yours?” Her voice was clear and pleasant.

She became curious. Where did this unfathomable youth come from during her isolated cultivation? She should know every master in Imperial Lineage but she had no impression of him despite racking her brains.

“Li Qiye.” He smiled.

“Ah, we’re from the same branch then, my last name is also Li.” She smiled faintly, enough to swoon any man.

“It’s a type of faith.” Li Qiye casually responded, not paying too much attention.

His attitude perplexed her even more because few in Imperial didn’t recognize her name.

After finding out, they would feel various emotions such as fear, admiration, reverence...

This was the first time she saw this reaction after stating her name.

“Dao Brother, do you know what evil is at play here?” She composed herself and asked.

He shook his head: “Hard to say right now since it’s too early to conclude. Of course, this has been at work for a while now, we’ll see some clues soon.”

“You mean that there is a sinister plan behind this?” She became surprised.

“Not to that level, it’s just a case of a turtledove taking over the nest of a magpie, that’s all.” Li Qiye said.

“Really?” She said: “So that progenitor was right? The dao source of Stone Harmony is still as rich as before.”

“If that’s not the case, then why hasn’t the system fall to Myriad yet?” Li Qiye said.

“So you are saying something is taking over Stone Harmony? Where is it then? There should be clues if it is taking advantage of the dao source.” She humbly asked.

Li Qiye looked down below: “I can’t tell right now. The progenitor of this land spent great effort to use a technique for foundational building. This system down here is quite profound with countless channels. It’s too early to lock onto this thing.”

“After coming here, I felt a majestic force underground, seemingly blockaded and hidden by another entity so I can’t pinpoint its direction.” She tilted her head and frowned.

“That’s correct, the dao source here is perfectly fine. Someone else is simply taking it for themselves.” Li Qiye smiled.

"I see." She replied: "Rumor has it that the prosperous system started declining in just one night. Something fell from the sky like a meteor, people believed that this ominous sign was the start of the decline."

"Not necessarily, let's not believe in superstition in the world of cultivation, but if this rumor is true, there will be an answer behind it all." He shook his head.

She nodded in agreement and looked down. The bottom was still as quiet and black as before.

"Are you interested in going down there? How about the two of us together?" She invited.

"Why not?" He intended on doing so in the first place so he accepted.

The two of them slowly descended, shoulder to shoulder.

During the process, she couldn't help stealing glances at him. The man was simply unfathomable.

"May I ask where you are from?" She asked.

"I'm just a passerby in Imperial, where I'm from doesn't matter that much." He chuckled.

"You must be from Myriad Lineage!" Li Yuzhen became surprised and impressed at the same time: "Your goal must be Immortal Lineage. I feel inadequate in comparison."

"You are very smart. A smart girl is always very lovely." He nodded.

This girl was world-renowned. Normally, she heard plenty of praises and flattery but all of them combined felt shallow. Li Qiye's casual remark was much more pleasant and meaningful.

"I should learn from you, Dao Brother. I always want to go to Immortal Lineage, alas, my cultivation is still weak right now so I do not dare to be reckless."

Keep in mind that she was the strongest among the young generation in Imperial. People would be dumbfounded to hear this humble comment from her.

"There will always be a chance for someone like you to soar to Immortal." He had a high evaluation of her.

"Thank you, Dao Brother, I hope so too." She smiled. One could never get tired of this smile.

"May I ask when you are leaving for Immortal Lineage? If we have free time later, I would like to ask you a question or two about certain issues that elude me." She sincerely said.

Outsiders would find this unbelievable. In the present day, maybe only three or so characters were qualified to teach Li Yuzhen.

#### [Chapter 2568: Bizarre Occurrence](#)

"Why not?" He chuckled and briefly answered.

Li Yuzhen looked at him and said: "Dao Brother, I can't figure out your grand dao. It is as if I'm looking at the reflection of the moon on a river or trying to look at the flowers through the early morning mist. It feels intangible and surreal, may I ask what art you cultivate?"

She wasn't trying to pry information out of him. This was sheer curiosity since Li Qiye appears normal yet was unbelievably mysterious. It seemed as if he wasn't actually within the three worlds and had escaped the five elements. That's why he seemed rather immaterial.

She wasn't an arrogant person but she certainly believed in her own abilities. Alas, she has never met someone like him before.

In her opinion, no other youth in Imperial could match her. However, this Li Qiye came out of nowhere so she rightfully became curious.

"It is a unique grand dao, the only of its kind in history that will open an entirely new epoch and cultivation method." He said without a care.

She responded with a skeptical look. Many would consider this to be the ramble of a mad man.

Three Immortals World has produced numerous progenitors and dao systems. These progenitors wouldn't dare to make this claim, not even the brilliant Gao Yang. But now, Li Qiye boasted without any hesitation.

She certainly didn't look down on him but his big tone still stunned her all the same, leaving her speechless.

After a while, she regained her wits and asked: "A new cultivation system? What is it like?"

She became interested in his cultivation system, leaving aside her skepticism of his claim.

"You'll find out when that day comes." He smiled mysteriously: "Not just Three Immortals but all worlds will turn to a new page. Alas, who knows if it will be a time of darkness or light? That's up to the individual world."

"What do you mean?" The knowledgeable girl still found this perplexing.

He chuckled in response and didn't elaborate. His expression remained normal and natural.

She was smart enough to not pry. People at their level had the right amount of propriety.

After a while, the two finally landed at the bottom of the pit. They looked around and saw nothing but darkness.

Of course, darkness couldn't shield anything from their gaze so they were aware of everything in their surroundings. Alas, they found nothing but loose mud on the ground.

"It's not here, such a big city nowhere to be found, this is unbelievable." Yuzhen became surprised.

White Apricot was a vast city but it wasn't here now after falling down. No inhabitants were around either; no ruins or a single eave-tile. The entire place disappeared from thin air as if it had been swallowed whole by a monster.

"There should be a reason for this." Li Qiye grabbed a handful of soil and carefully pinched it with his other hand. Specks streamed down his fingers.

“Where have the citizens gone?” Yuzhen searched through the area with her divine intent but there was nothing here except the two of them.

“Even deeper.” Li Qiye said: “Something has come here and took them away.”

“Is it still nearby?” Her gaze swept around with lightning speed. There was no doubt that once she took action, the result would be quite impressive.

“Long gone now.” He threw the remaining pile of mud on the ground and wiped his palms: “The time is ripe so it finally wants to take action.”

“Dao Brother, so there is really something evil at work here?” She asked.

“I don’t know if it is evil or not, but it certainly isn’t a good thing after causing the collapse of this system.” Li Qiye chuckled.

“What is it?” She inquired: “Stone Harmony was prosperous back then with a True Emperor around. Its power far exceeded the Mu and the Li. People said that unless it’s a progenitor, defeating this system would have been difficult. I’ve never heard of a great battle or anything before its decline.”

“This is beyond the imagination of regular people.” He walked around and surveyed the area carefully: “The only thing I’m sure of is that this thing is not from this world.”

“Not from this world? A creature outside of Three Immortals?” She became startled.

“What worlds are outside of Three Immortals?” She paused for a moment before asking again.

Of course, the cultivators of Three Immortals didn’t know about the worlds outside of their own, such as the nine worlds and thirteen continents.

“Not that simple.” Li Qiye shook his head: “Ordinary existence can’t cross to this place. To be more exact, this thing should be from above Three Immortals.”

“Above Three Immortals?” Yuzhen’s eyes became serious: “I heard that above us is a place with immortality.”

“No.” Li Qiye chuckled: “Who knows the validity of that claim, this so-called world of immortality. All I know is that above Three Immortals is a place that can surpass the high heaven.”

“High heaven?” She looked up towards the sky vault. Since they were at the bottom of an abyss, her gaze pierced through thousands of miles before seeing the blue expanse.

In fact, cultivators in this place had a very vague impression of the high heaven. They only believed that it was above the sky vault.

“Yes, you have no idea what it is because this place doesn’t suffer from tribulations.” Li Qiye understood her reaction.

Back in the nine worlds and the thirteen continents, each breakthrough would end with a heavenly tribulation full of lightning arcs. The survivors there knew exactly what the high heaven was. Some even cursed and referred to it as villainous heaven or other derogatory names.

"I have heard of tribulations before. When the wise sages want to reach a higher level, they might have to face these tribulations. Are you saying that the disappearance of this city is due to a tribulation?" She said.

"The old villainous heaven isn't that bored." Li Qiye shook his head: "Plus, if it wants to send down even just a tiny tribulation, it wouldn't end with just this."

"What kind of tribulation would it be then?" She knew nothing about this topic.

"An apocalypse." He casually answered.

"An apocalypse?" She was still moved despite her immense strength.

After a brief pause, she continued on: "What is the power entailed in this apocalypse?"

Li Qiye looked at her and answered: "Someone like you is only an ant, same with the majority of progenitors."

She took a deep breath. Most would first become embarrassed then anger would be next. It sounded like an insult but she took it seriously.

She had confidence in her strength. Though she might not be the strongest, but if she was only an ant under that tribulation, just how strong must it be? That scene must be terrifying.

#### [Chapter 2569: Secrets](#)

Li Yuzhen glanced at the sky for a second before speaking: "Will this apocalypse come here?"

She couldn't imagine the gravity of the situation at all.

"Three Immortals World is very lucky." He chuckled: "Generations passed by on the river of time and it has escaped the terrifying years. This required perfect luck and the effort of the old sages."

She quietly listened. Though she didn't have a full grasp of all the information, she was still shaken by this revelation.

She found out about the worlds outside of Three Immortals and the darkness plaguing them.

"So what's the reason behind these apocalypses from the high heaven?" She asked.

He only answered with a smile. He then stopped and squatted down, picking up pieces from the ground. They seemed to be sticky skin fragments as if a tentacle has fallen down from above.

"A bit interesting, how did this devious thing come here? It doesn't make sense." He stared intensely at it.

"Pop!" A tiny tentacle emerged out of the piece of skin and tried to dig into Li Qiye's body - quite a nauseating sight.

He smiled and ignited a plume of fire in his palm with an indigo shade.

"Buzz." The fire burned the pieces into ashes scattering away.

Next, he gazed at the sky once more in an investigative manner.

"It doesn't make sense... how did it come down? Looks like no place is safe anymore." He himself became startled and murmured.

He recalled the skeleton found in the heavenly prison and contemplated. These events weren't that simple. An underlying current has started, issuing changes in the depths. This world just didn't know about it.

"Could you elaborate on the world above?" She quietly asked.

"It's full of terrors beyond your imagination." He looked back and said seriously.

She inquired: "How so? The people there are incomparably strong?"

"It's just one way to describe it, akin to how immortal is just another description. Do you know what immortals look like?" He chuckled.

"Immortals?" She has never seen one before.

Who has actually seen a true immortal? Probably none in history. People simply didn't have a good idea about these beings.

"Why are you bringing up immortals right now?" She had a bad feeling about this and stared at Li Qiye.

"People have two reactions to the unknown - fear and curiosity." Li Qiye looked at her and said: "Fear stems from invincibility and power while curiosity stems from ignorance. The latter also encompasses desire and hope. For example, some yearn for the light while others are afraid of darkness."

She quietly contemplated.

"If you could be granted any wish, what would it be?" He smilingly asked.

"Immortality." She answered without needing to think.

This response was quite common. Many top experts chased after everlasting life. After all, obtaining this would solve many problems. Infinite time would allow people to do many things.

"What about after obtaining immortality?" He continued.

Now this question finally stumped her since she has never thought about it before.

Immortality was unreachable, only a dream. If the dream itself was impossible to obtain, why would anyone think about what comes after?

She thought about it and couldn't answer the question.

He began again: "Immortality in the truest sense of the word doesn't exist in this world. To overcome this requires paying a great price. If you ever see a real immortal in the future, you need to start running as far away as the world allows."

"Why?" She slightly grimaced, having a good idea of the bad implication.

"Because he's an immortal with everlasting life." Li Qiye said with a profound gaze.

Yuzhen shuddered since she grasped several things so far during this conversation.

For many people, meeting an immortal would be a once-in-the-ages opportunity, the greatest of luck. No one would miss this chance to ask many questions.

But now, Li Qiye proposed to do the opposite - run as far away as possible.

Going against conventional wisdom sounded insane to others, but not to Li Yuzhen.

He stopped then looked around and said: "This is only the beginning of a hunt, that's all."

"Dao Brother, other cities might meet the same fate?" She stopped as well.

"Yes." He nodded: "Attacking White Orchid is akin to using a butcher's blade to kill a chicken. It will grow stronger and hungrier."

"Dao Brother, could you find it so we can destroy it together?" She took a deep breath and powerfully said.

Though she didn't want to play the role of a savior all the time, she would never stand and watch when evil was happening in front of her eyes.

"It's not easy to chase after it." Li Qiye shook his head: "Let's leave this place first."

He flew to the sky after saying this with Yuzhen right behind him. The two of them returned to the edge of the abyss.

At this moment, more people were coming from the horizons. The sudden disappearance of White Orchid finally attracted other masters who rushed here to figure it out.

"Dao Brother, unfortunately, I have some other tasks to deal with and will have to leave for now. See you another day." Yuzhen cupped her fist, aware that it was time to leave after seeing other people arriving on the scene.

He nodded: "See you later."

Her figure flashed into nothingness. It wasn't hard for someone at her level to be untraceable.

Li Qiye sensed the beat of the world and narrowed his gaze towards one particular direction: "Looks like chaos is coming. Are the sages of Three Immortals ready?"

He stepped into the sky and rushed forward with a clear path in mind.

He traveled through multiple mountains before stopping in a valley since he heard shoutings.

An old man was imprisoned by tree demons in this valley. They raised their vine whips, preventing him from leaving.

He tried multiple times to escape but couldn't, only gaining more bloody wounds in the process. His vitality gradually depleted so he put up less of a fight.

The tree demons pushed further in with a ferocious expression - ready to drink blood and consume flesh.

He lost hope and lamented loudly: "This is the end for me!"



“Pop!” Li Qiye interrupted his moment of despair by casually piercing through several tree demons with one finger strike. The rest became afraid and ran away.

He regained his composure and became ecstatic after being saved.

“Thank you for saving me, Young Noble.” He bowed his head after seeing his rescuer.

### [Chapter 2570: Mingluo City](#)

“I was just passing by, it’s no big deal.” Li Qiye said insipidly.

Nevertheless, the old man still thought of Li Qiye as his savior and bowed again: “My name is Wu Youzheng. Though you do not wish for repayment, just say the words in the future and I will come running and do everything I...”

He couldn’t finish because Li Qiye has already disappeared into the horizon. He didn’t care nor want to care about the old man’s gratitude.

The old man gently sighed while looking at the sky, aware that he has met a master. The guy was capable of destroying those tree demons so easily. Such masters were hard to get close to.

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Li Qiye continued on with smooth footsteps. The pacing looked slow but he was actually traveling through Stone Harmony at an incredible speed.

Stone Harmony used to reign over Imperial so its territory was massive. Alas, one could see the clear illness plaguing the system.

It had no inhabitants and very few cities. The natural sceneries had a bleak feeling to it. All in all, it resembled a dying old man or a candle flickering to the wind. Even the birds and fish had no vitality to them. In fact, the place used to be the complete opposite, bustling and full of people and animals.

As time passed, the capable sects and powerful cultivators moved away from the declining system. The ones that couldn’t do the same thing suffered destruction.

As for the animals, the ones strong enough also left this system for other places. As the saying goes, the wise birds pick the right branch.

Furthermore, the spirit medicines and natural resources also gradually disappeared. This resulted in a compounded effect, accelerating the decline of the system.

Li Qiye traveled through half of the system. It was a quiet trip since he rarely saw other cultivators.

The most common sights were villages in the remote mountains with thirty to fifty families or so. That’s already considered lively for this area. Moreover, they were far and away from each other.

No one would believe that this was a system of the imperial level. Its dao land shouldn’t last long at this rate.

However, being part of this system was a blessing and a curse. The land might have been withering but the dao source remained, adding stability to the system.

A collapsing system was a calamity for the inhabitants, almost like a world-ending event. The strong cultivators would have ran far away or prepared enough to survive.

The weak could only watch the scene of destruction, only to be buried along with the rubble in the end.

Of course, this trend of stagnation couldn't last forever. No matter how strong a progenitor might be, they couldn't create an everlasting dao source.

A system's prosperity relied on the effort of the sages for many generations. They continuously fed the system with their own strength.

But now, due to a lack of population, there were fewer and fewer cultivators, let alone existences at the imperial or eternal level. The lack of generational nourishment would result in an inevitable collapse.

Li Qiye wasn't emotional during his journey. He has seen the rise and fall of numerous sects in his life and has grown numb to this cycle.

"It's not just trying to fill its belly." Li Qiye had a good overview of the situation during this pursue. His mighty divine intent has locked on to this land so nothing could escape his eyes.

He knew that the disappearance of White Orchid was only the beginning. This tragedy could repeat and spread all over Imperial.

He finally stopped as an ancient city emerged on the horizon.

It must be wider than ten thousand miles, just like a monster resting on the land. However, it was naturally in a disorderly state. Many parts were abandoned so the real thing became less than one-tenth of its former glory. Nevertheless, it was still the largest city in Stone Harmony at the present.

The towering walls and buildings remained, though abandoned. One could catch a glimpse of their old golden days. This must have been the center of the entire world where powerful beings ruled and accepted tributes.

Now, the only visitors were the wild grass and weeds.

He stopped and perused the area, noticing steam and smoke from cooking in the distance: "The next target is here."

Without a doubt, this city would be just like White Orchid City, disappearing completely with only a great abyss left behind.

"Death is coming soon." Li Qiye chuckled before entering the city.

The name was Mingluo, the strongest and biggest city in Stone Harmony. It had the highest population of cultivators as well, around two to three hundred thousand people.

It managed to survive to the present due to its riches and strong foundation in the past, unlike other fallen cities.

The streets were still the same scale as before, extremely wide and long. People were coming and going. Shouts could be heard from the street merchants to the workers in the wine pavilions.

After traveling through the wilderness for so long, people would be infected by the lively atmosphere found here.

During the night, the city was brightly lit by lamps and lights. It had an intoxicating feeling, allowing people to see the temptation of the mundane world and life, in general. This was different from the unreachable temples and mountains meant for the lonely cultivators.

The place resembled the mortal world since there weren't that many cultivators and sects around.

Mortals had a short lifespan, no different from ants. They couldn't see the entire world so some weren't even aware of their system's gradual destruction. They were more than happy to live day-by-day with enough food and material possessions.

Lifespan was the biggest difference between a mortal and a cultivator. The former was akin to the night-blooming cactus - short-lived yet beautiful.

Li Qiye was unaffected by the atmosphere here. He has seen the flourishing world of the mortals many times before and was just a passerby. This world wasn't suitable for him.

"It's nice being a mortal, happy and unaware of the incoming destruction. I suppose even ants have their own happiness." He looked at the carriages zooming through the streets and smiled.

His dao heart has been polished by tribulations and pain so nothing could move him.

There was no doubt that Mingluo City has been chosen as the second target. The entire place was going to disappear.

He didn't come here to save the city and its inhabitants, only to carry out his own business. Its survival was none of his concern because he wasn't a savior and had no reason to do so.

In fact, in his mind, destruction and survival were the same things for Mingluo. Even if it was lucky enough to make it through this disaster, it would still crumble in the future. It was only a matter of time.

This was the cycle of time. Everlasting prosperity didn't exist; destruction was inevitable.

His destination was an abandoned location inside the city. Overgrown weeds were everywhere along with insects and snakes.

This place was different from the wasteland outside. There were still structural remnants and outlines of temples.

This wasn't the case here. It was flat since all the existing structures have collapsed.